

RECREATION PROJECT PLAN FOR THE UPPER GREEN RIVER SPECIAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA

1. Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management State Office in Cheyenne, Wyoming received an appropriation for upgrading facilities at the Upper Green River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). Existing facilities were originally constructed by the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish with the BLM assuming the maintenance obligation in 1978. The Project Data Sheet funding request stated the need for BLM road 5201 surface and drainage improvements, widening of spur roads, upgrading toilet facilities, graveling of picnic sites and new tables and picnic rings.

The BLM Pinedale Field Office determined that a Recreation Project Plan (RPP) needed to be prepared before constructing the listed improvements in order to integrate them into a long-term management strategy for the area. A scope of work was issued to prepare the RPP, which included the assessment of current issues, visitor use, visitor profiles, a 20 year needs assessment, and the development of two alternatives for consideration and preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA).

1.a. Relationship to Approved Recreation Area Management Plan

A Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) has not been prepared for this area. In the absence of a RAMP, the Pinedale 1988 Resource Management Plan (RMP) was used as a guide. The "Management Actions" section of the Pinedale RMP contains the following information regarding the management of the Upper Green River:

Management emphasis will be placed on the current recreation management areas including Scab Creek, the Green and New Fork rivers, Oregon Trail routes and Boulder Lakes.

Recreation facilities will be installed where needed to accommodate the anticipated recreation uses and use levels and to provide for adequate public health and safety.

Recreation management for the...Green River...will emphasize maintaining or improving the quality of the sites and the recreation experience.

Public lands along the Green and New Fork rivers will be managed to provide fishing and float boating opportunities. Necessary facilities will be developed to provide for protection of users and the resources.

Where applicable, recreation facilities will be developed and managed in a manner that will maintain, restore, and improve riparian values.

A four day public scoping process was also conducted to assess current issues, visitor use, user profiles, future needs and to allow the general public to express their concerns regarding the management of the area. Twenty one meetings were held with area stakeholders, special interest groups and the general public, including federal and state agencies, local governments, permit users





residents, environmental interests, recreationists, businesses, contiguous property interests and local elected officials.

Two alternative management strategies were generated during the meetings. These two plans, the “Proposed Action” and the “No Action” alternative, were presented at a public open house held at the end of the four-day scoping process. However, during the development of the RPP, some alternatives were considered, but were dismissed after preliminary investigation. These alternatives are discussed in greater detail in the Environmental Assessment, which accompanies this RPP. Stakeholder

participants and the general public were invited to review the alternatives and provide additional comment. Results from this meeting were posted on the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Pinedale Field Office website to provide additional opportunity for public input. This RPP is consistent with the input received from the public scoping process.

In addition to the public scoping process, the Pinedale Field Office Outdoor Recreation Planner conducted a user survey that was partially complete and available during the preparation of the RPP. The data was helpful in understanding visitor profile and use.

The segment of the Upper Green River flowing within the Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) was recently determined suitable for consideration as “scenic” under the Wild and Scenic River Act as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System (NWSRS). Therefore, this Recreation Project Plan complies with the interim management prescriptions previously established to maintain the river’s outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational and historic values. The recreation developments prescribed within this RPP maintain the natural-like appearance of the lands within the waterway corridor and their immediate environment.



1.b. Project Objectives and Justification

The goal of this RPP is to prepare a management strategy that protects and preserves the Upper Green River SRMA and accommodates projected increases in recreational use over the next twenty years while maintaining the quality of the existing recreational experience. The RPP goal will be accomplished through the managed dispersal and separation of user activity. Users will be separated into two broad groups: day-users, and extended stay users. Extended stay users are further subdivided into group campers and individual/tent campers. By providing designated boat ramp/day-use parking areas and separate campsite facilities, one group’s enjoyment of the Upper Green River

SRMA will not preclude other group's access and use of the area. The objective of this RPP is to continue to accommodate extended-stay users, day-users, float and bank fishers, water sport floaters, hikers, equestrians, livestock ranchers, interpretive program participants and hunters. Due to safety concerns, signage will be placed at key locations in order to limit certain uses at specific sites. For instance, through signage, travel in large vehicles and/or vehicles towing trailers may be limited to areas that are deemed safe for such vehicles. The various interests held by private recreational users, commercial recreation enterprises, livestock grazing, hunting activities and regional wildlife requirements were also taken into consideration.



The Upper Green River SRMA is experiencing increased pressure from private and commercial recreation activities. Increased use is related to the growth of principal western inter-mountain population centers and local communities, and the aquatic resource enhancements implemented along the Upper Green River through a cooperative effort between the BLM and the Wyoming Game & Fish Department (WGFD). Adding to the popularity of the area is the SRMA is currently a "Free Use Area". A collection program will be instated in the future to assist with the maintenance of visitor services.

The increasing level and diversity of recreation activities within the area is straining the current infrastructure and threatening to negatively impact the resources that attract visitors here. The social impacts that would occur in association with increased use are also threatening to degrade the recreational experience. In order to preserve the current recreational experience while accommodating more visitors, there is a pressing need to prepare a twenty year Recreation Project Plan for the Upper Green River SRMA. The public scoping process also identified the need to adequately educate users about the area and of the conditions of the spur roads that connect to the various river access sites.

The Recreation Project Plan for the Upper Green River SRMA is a 20-year, multi-phased plan. The long-range plan addresses the management of recreation activity and the development of facilities at each of the 12 river access sites. The initial phase of this long-range plan is based on immediate need and funding availability and will address the condition of BLM Road 5201 and facilities at the river access sites. Subsequent phases will be implemented based on the level of occupation, use and the need for resource management as determined by the BLM Pinedale field office.

1.c. Participating Agencies

Coordination with other public agencies: the following Federal, State and Local agencies, departments and offices were contacted to participate with the project scoping and document review:

1. Federal:

- a. Bureau of Land Management, Pinedale Field Office
- b. US Forest Service, Pinedale District Ranger's Office *
- c. US Fish & Wildlife Service *
- d. US Army Corps of Engineers
- e. Bureau of Reclamation *
- f. Natural Resources Conservation District *

2. State agencies:

- a. Wyoming Department of Transportation *
- b. Wyoming Department of Game and Fish *

3. Sublette County:

- a. Board of County Commissioners
- b. Department of Planning and Zoning *
- c. Sheriff's Department
- d. County Assessors Office
- e. Department Parks & Recreation Board *
- f. Sublette County Soil & Water Conservation District *

4. Pinedale Town Council *

The listed Federal, State and local government agencies that participated in the scoping meetings or provided subsequent comments are indicated by an *.

Appendix A documents the comments received from participating government agencies and members of the public.

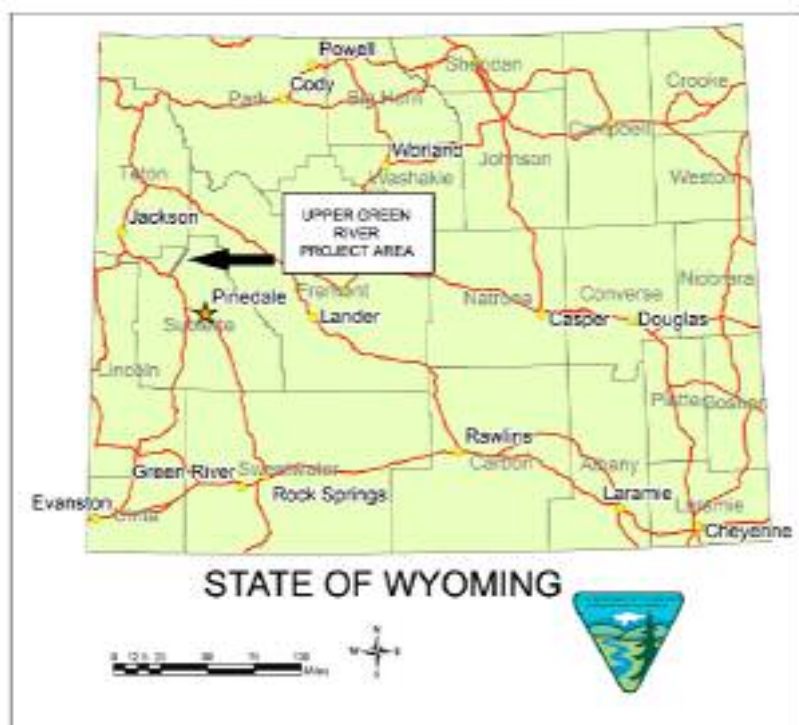
1.d. Location and Setting

The Upper Green River SRMA is located in Sublette County approximately 22 miles north of Pinedale, Wyoming, and northeast of U.S. Highway 189/191 in Township 35N, Range 111 W, Sections 3, 4, 8, 9 and Township 36 N, Range 111 W, Sections 1, 2, 11, 14, 22, 23, 27, 28, 33, 34. The SRMA is approximately eight linear miles along the Upper Green River and encompasses a total of 5,156 acres (8 square miles). The project area within the SRMA is delineated by Highway 191 and the Warren Bridge to the south, BLM road 5201 along the west edge and the Green River's east bank defines the eastern boundary. The area extends northeast eight miles from Warren Bridge where it terminates at private property. BLM road 5201 traverses an arid sagebrush bluff and provides access to 10 spur roads, which lead to 12 river access sites situated below the bluff in a pronounced river valley. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department holds deed to approximately 88 acres that serve public use within the Upper Green River SRMA. River Access Site 6 (83.33 total acres) and Site 8 (5.57 acres) lie within the Wyoming Game and Fish holdings.

The Upper Green River SRMA proximity to population centers is:

Pinedale, WY	Distance: 22 miles south	Population: 1,500
Rock Springs, WY	Distance: 125 miles south	Population: 19,000
Jackson, WY	Distance: 52 miles north	Population: 9,000
Cheyenne, WY	Distance: 380 miles east	Population: 53,000
Salt Lake City, UT	Distance: 262 miles south	Population: 904,331 (metro)

Project Location Map

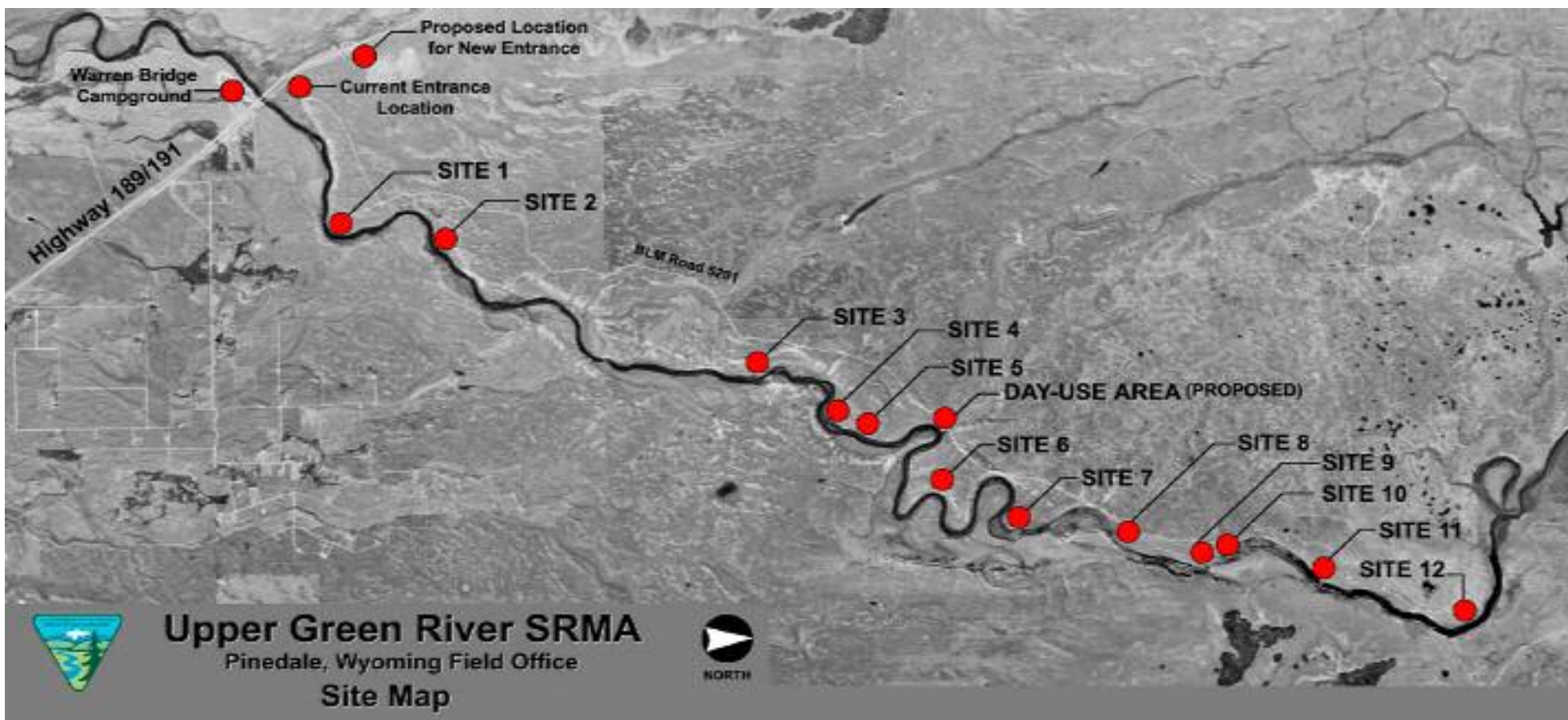


Project Vicinity Map



Figure 1: Location and Vicinity Map

Figure 2: Site Map



UPPER GREEN RIVER SRMA
PINEDALE, WYOMING FIELD OFFICE
Wyoming Game and Fish Department Lands

MAY 2003

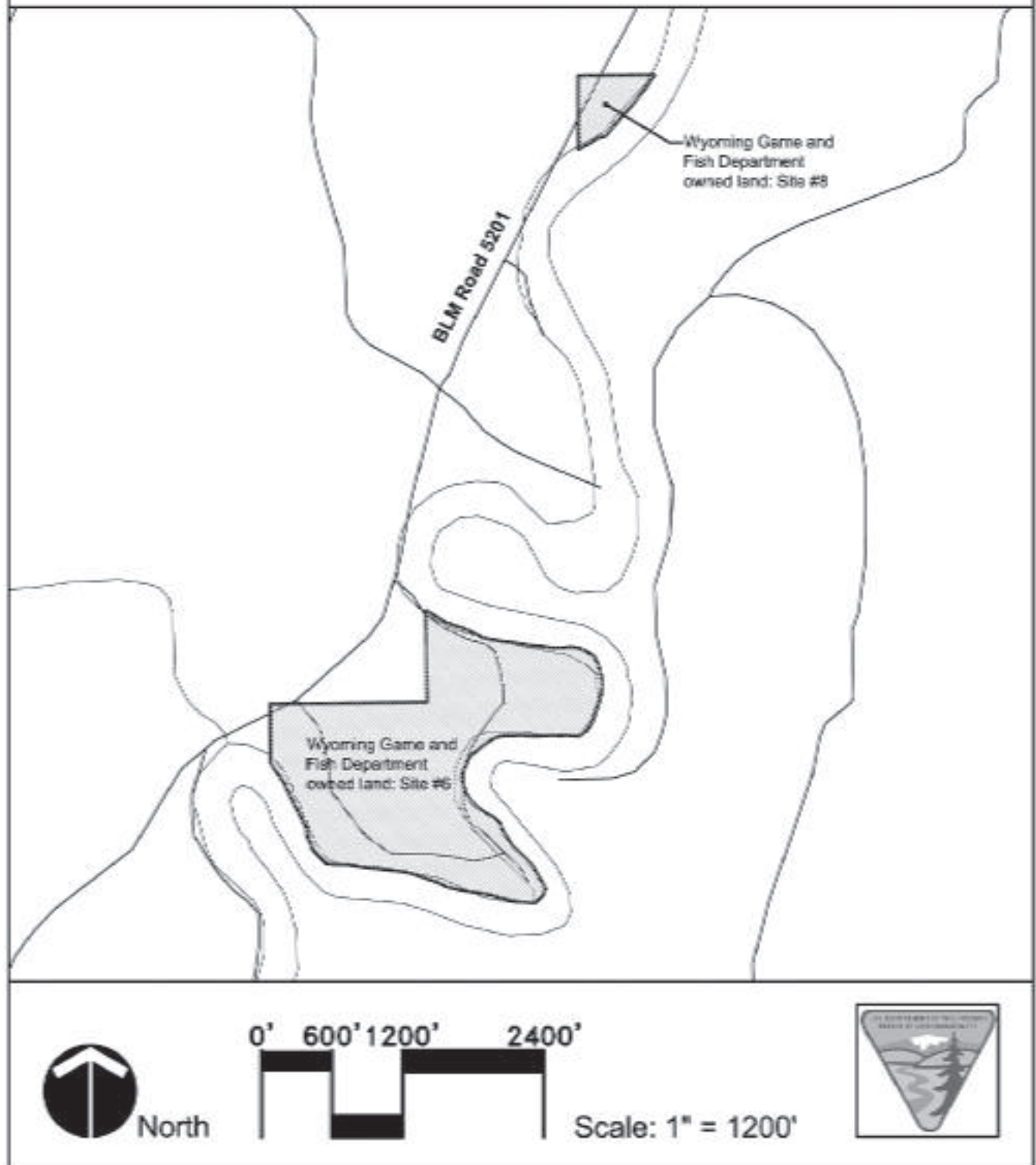


Figure 3: Wyoming Game and Fish Department Holdings Within the Upper Green River SRMA